

REMARKS:

Careful consideration has been given to the Official Action of August 28, 2008 and reconsideration of the application as amended is requested.

The Examiner objects to claims 1, 6, and 10 because of informalities.

Claims 1-3 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by EPO 1,369,634 (hereafter EPO'634).

Claims 1-2, 10-11, and 13 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being allegedly anticipated by Matsubara (US Patent No. 7,390,029).

The Examiner's indication that claims 4-9 and 12 are allowable if rewritten in independent form has been noted with appreciation.

In response, claim 3 has been amended to incorporate claims 1 and 2, which have been canceled, and to be in better form.

Claim 5 has been amended to be in better form.

Claim 6 has been amended as suggested by the Examiner, and to recite features of the backup parts. Support for the amendments can be found, for example, at paragraphs 37 and 38 of the specification.

Claim 10 has been amended to be dependent on claim 4, which provides antecedent support for the locking legs.

The claims as now presented are respectfully distinguished over the cited art as will be discussed hereafter.

The claimed invention provides a coupler in which the coupling body comprises a blocking part (38) that engages with the complete connection verifying members of the retainer to prevent the complete connection verifying members from being pressed into the coupling body when the annular ridge of the end part of the tube has not advanced to the position where the retainer can engage the annular ridge of the tube. See, for example, 3 and 9. As illustrated in Fig. 1, the blocking part 38 is provided at the coupling body 16 (housing body).

In contrast, EPO '634 requires an additional and separate stopper 200, which is not a part of the housing body 100, to prevent the retainer from being pressed into the housing body when the annular protruding portion 401 of the pipe 400 has not been fully inserted into the housing body 100. Since both the stopper 200 and the retainer 300 are separate parts that are separately inserted into the housing body 100, there may be some gaps between the stopper, the retainer, and the housing body. Furthermore, the stopper 200 may not match precisely to the retainer 300.

On the other hand, by forming the blocking part 38 on the coupling body 16, the claimed invention eliminates the need for a separate stopper and the blocking part 38 can

match more precisely to the retainer 16.

In view of the above action and comments, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance and early notice thereof is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'J. Richards', written over a horizontal line.

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